THE AFGHANISTAN COUNCIL

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PROBLEMS OF RELIGIOUS AND ETHNIC IDENTITY

by
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Occasional Paper # 19





THE ASIA SOCIETY

112 East 64th Street, New York, N.Y. 10021

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And those who believe and have emigrated
and struggled in the way of God.
those who have given refuge and help -
those in truth are the believers,
and theirs shall be forgiveness and
generous provision.

The Koran sura VIII:75

This story begins in the fertile valleys and towns of Central Asia. For many, the story is completed in Afghanistan in communities which resemble those in their homeland. Others have roamed farther to India, Saudi Arabia and even the United States.

When I went to Afghanistan I intended to study village Uzbeks or Turkmens. Although I had read Soviet and Western literature on Central Asia, it was not in my mind to search out those people who had left Soviet Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan and were currently living in Afghanistan. However, as luck or fate would have it, that is exactly what happened.

When I sought the advice of the director of the Afghan-American Educational Commission, the agency which helped me obtain governmental permission for my research,* I mentioned various possible locations in the north. When I named Kunduz, I was interrupted. It seemed that the director knew a teacher in the town of Kunduz and he thought that this teacher was an Uzbek.

I first met the teacher at the director's home and we began to talk about the possibility of fieldwork in his home town. When I asked him about his ethnic background, I was surprised to find out that his parents had come from the Fergana Valley in Uzbekistan. In fact many of the people in his neighborhood had come from the same small town in the Fergana Valley, the town of Kāsān (Kasansai). See figure 1.) He also said that there were many people from the town of Namangan in Kunduz and, indeed, all of the major towns of the Fergana Valley were represented.

My research focused on a neighborhood unit called a mahalla which was dominated by the Kasanis. The period of substantial emigration based on the recollections of informants was from 1928-38, a time in which collectivization of agriculture, pressure against Islam and a transformation of traditional social customs was at its height in Soviet Central Asia.

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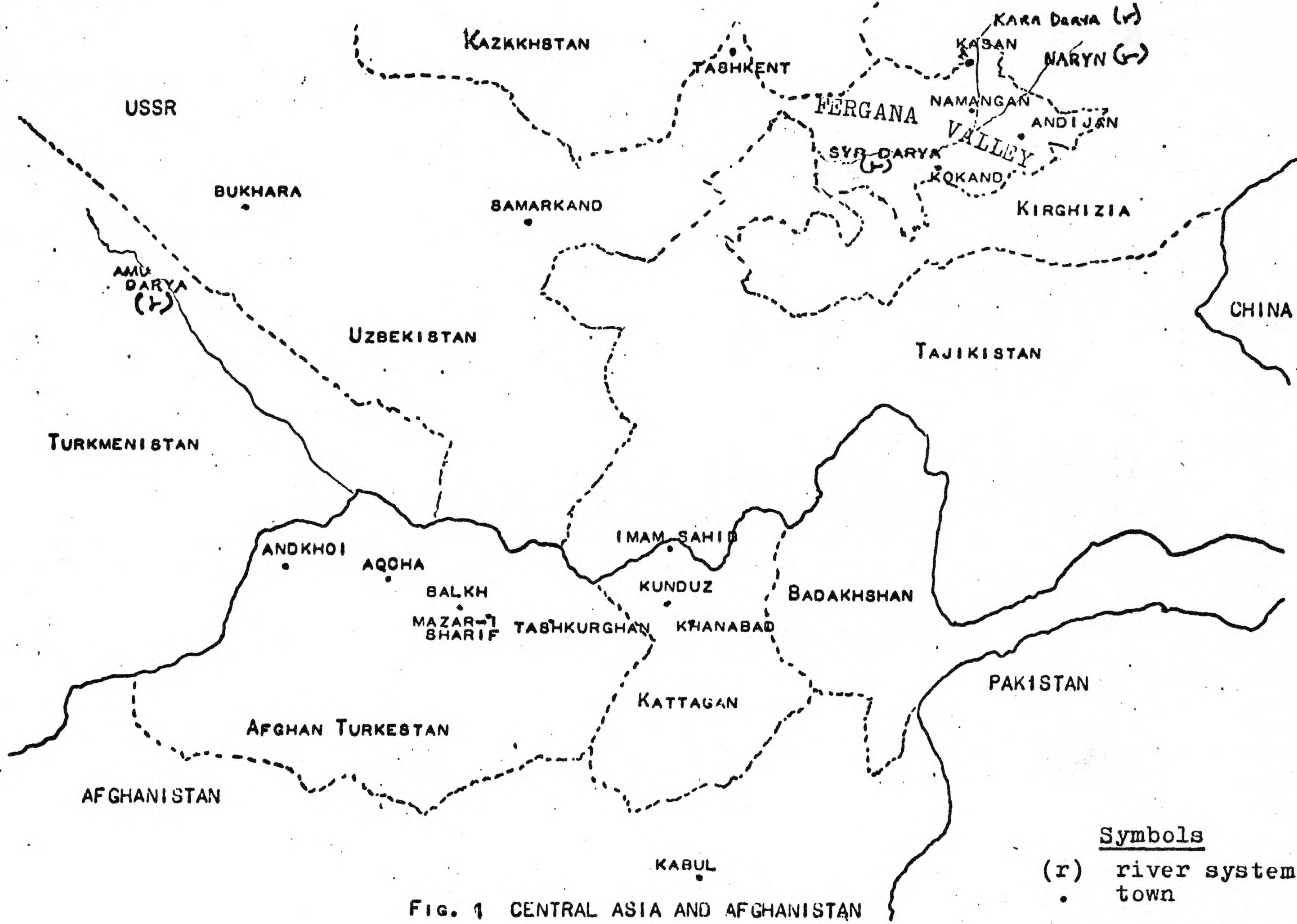


FIG. 1 CENTRAL ASIA AND AFGHANISTAN

Ethnomusicologist Mark Slobin believes that perhaps the largest body of Soviet emigres including Uzbeks, Tajiks and Kazakhs has settled in the Kunduz area. He notes that these emigres who fled across the border in the 1920s and 30s are properly called mohajerin or refugees (1976:12). Mohajerin is an Arabic word used in the Koran as the term for those who fled from Mecca to Medina with Mohammad. The usual translation is simply emigrants (Arberry, 1976). Thus, it was in a Kunduz neighborhood with an emigre family that I lived, worked and wrote.

Mohajerin Past

Up to the beginning of the Soviet regime, the traditional distinction of the peoples of Turkestan was not between ethnic groups, or even between Turkic-speaking and Iranian-speaking groups, but between those who followed a nomadic way of life ad those who followed a sedentary way of life (Bennigsen 1967:24). The sedentary element considered itself in the first place as Muslim and, after that, as inhabiting a town or a definite district; ethnic conceptions had scarcely any validity (Barthold 1934:175-176). In general, communities that had long been sedentary, regardless of origin and whether they spoke Turkic or Iranian languages, considered themselves as forming a block distinct from the Turkic nomads. The nomads called the sedentary people, "Sarts," a Turkic word implying trader or merchant and, sometimes, "Tajiks," even when their language was Turkic. The nomad or semi-nomad tribes who had arrived in Turkestan at the time of Shaibani Khan's invasion called themselves Uzbeks.

Russian ethnographers of the Tsarist period followed native practice, distinguishing between "Sart," those of oasis culture, mostly Turkic speakers and some Persian speakers; and "Uzbek," those who retained some portion of tribal culture. The Soviets regarded "Sart" as perjorative and dropped it from the ethnographic vocabulary. In Soviet usage the name "Uzbek" was extended to include all groups speaking related Turkic dialects; those formerly known as Sarts; those settled peoples who retained some memory of tribal origins such as a tribal name and kin rules; and tribes who continued to lead a partly pastoral existence on the fringes of the oases (Bacon 1966:18).

Tajiks constitute the oldest ethnic element in Turkestan but, apart from the Persian language and the fact that they have always been sedentary, there seems to be no distinction between them and the Uzbeks. The word "Tajik" may be derived from Tay, the name of an Arab tribe. In the 10th century, Tazi, a corruption of Tay, was used in Transoxania as a generic term for all Muslims.

It is important to distinguish between the Uzbeks with tribal names, whether Afghan or Transoxanian, and the mohajerin who provide the subject of this study. Mohajerin give none of the above tribal names as their own; instead, they offer town names and have formed urban neighborhoods on the basis of common town origin. Slobin also notes that the urban origin of these people (1976:12). Thus, the mohajerin might be said to have Sart origins if one were to adhere to pre-Soviet ethnographic terminology.

Kasan is a small town to the north of the Syr Darya on a little tributary called Kasansai; sai is a Persian word meaning torrent or rushing stream. The town was founded in the 2nd century A.D. at the border between agricultural and grazing land. In the time of the Kushan empire, Ist to 4th centuries, it was the political and economic center of the Fergana Valley. Then around the 8th century it fell into decline. In his memoirs Babur wrote, "Kasan has excellent air and beautiful little gardens. As these gardens all lie along the bed of the torrent, people call them the 'fine front of the coat.' Between Kasanis and Aushis (another Fergana town) there is rivalry about the beauty and climate of their

townships." (Beveridge 1912:10).

Historical evidence indicates that the ethnic composition of Kasan is primarily Tajik. An 1892 article in L'Anthropologie by Paul Gault surveys the Fergana Valley and concludes that most of the towns to the north of the Syr Darya and west of the Naryn River are Tajik with the exception of Namangan while the rest of the Fergana Valley is primarily Uzbek. This pattern has continued through the modern period; a recent Russian book on the area notes that although Tajiks are in the minority in the Fergana Valley, they predominate in the Kasansai, Pansk and Chust districts (Akramov 1960:21). The latter two towns are also north of the Syr Darya and west of the Naryn.

The most complete ethnographic account of Kasan was published in 1928 by Mikhail Andreev in the Russian journal, the Society for Studies of Tajikistan and Iranian Peoples Beyond its Boundaries. In 1928, Kasan was a town of about 3,000 households. Andreev states that the majority of the population was Tajik-speaking but that a few women spoke Turkic. He also commented on the many Turkic words which seemed to have replaced older Persian terminology (1928:11).

Many of the older residents of the Kasani neighborhood in Kunduz were still in Kasan at the time of Andreev's visit. In Kunduz today only a few old men can remember the Kasani dialect of Tajik and they speak it only to each other. They described it much as Andreev did as containing a larger number of Uzbek words that were then Tajikized. For example, the Persian verb, kardan, in its conjugated form might be added to an Uzbek expression thus creating a verb construction in Kasani.

Never did I hear any of the Kasani emigrants refer to himself or herself as Tajik; always the term Kasani was used. Most of them were as fluent in Uzbek as they were in Persian. They explained this bilingualism as a result of the fact that throughout most of the Fergana Valley, including the larger town of Namangan near Kasan, Uzbek was the language commonly used. In visiting the bazaar and acquaintances in other towns, it was convenient to know both languages. The Kasani emigrant generation also did not refer to themselves as Uzbek although younger men of the first Afghan-born generation occasionally made this claim.

The Kasanis make up only a small portion of the mohajer community in Afghanistan. There are mojaherin from all the towns in the Fergana Valley including Namangan, Andijan and Kokand and also the city of Tashkent. Thus, the majority of mohajerin are probably Uzbek-dominant speakers. The Mohajerin, both Uzbeks and Tajiks, view themselves as constituting a distinct endogamous group in Afghanistan.

Religion and Identity

As refugees, the mohajerin had to carve out a respectable position vis-a-vis other groups in Afghanistan. They had a ready-made issue which could easily be used for these purposes. They, like the original mohajerin, left their homes for the sake of religion or so they believe. The elders of the mohajerin community through the years sought to impress on young men that their reputation, that is, their ideology of religious superiority, had to be continued. The elders' method of achieving this goal was the enforcement of extreme behavioral piety.[1] Young men have transformed the extremely pietistic norm and used it as another method of expressing ethnic identity in the multi-ethnic urban milieu.

Every aspect of mohajer social life from their maintenance of a relatively low brideprice to their supposed reluctance to attend the sporting event buzkashi - a game played on horseback with a headless calf - is attributed to Islam. Even more impressive is the reputation for religious observance which is attributed to them by members of other ethnic groups.

Once, while discussing the higher brideprice in Andkhoi with informants originally from that locale, they said that the Ferganachi way was better. When I questioned this, it was explained as demonstrating less concern with money and possessions, more din dār, in keeping with the religious life. On another occasion I was visiting a Pashtun family in the mahalla when another Pashtun woman came to visit. They were discussing a previous visit of mine at night when my "grandfather" came to the compound door and sent a message in with a boy to fetch me home. This was considered praiseworthy conduct and it was again stated that these Ferganachis were din dār, religiously observant. Certainly, these people had to speak pleasantly of my hosts as part of their hospitality to me, but the fact that it was religious observance that was singled out is significant. The implication of their statements was that knowledge of Islam and its observance insure proper social behavior, a fundamental premise shared by groups throughout Afghanistan.

Just as religion serves as a means of social control, more exactly, a means by which elders control younger men, religion also becomes a battlefield through which interethnic conflicts are played. Young mohajer men and boys are primarily the ones involved in these kinds of prestige contests, but old men may also be engaged.

I saw this kind of contest being played out by the third son of my household and an older, well-educated Pashtun man in the latter's village near Kabul. The Pashtun initiated the religious test by asking the mohajer about religion in the North. After a while he said that he understood that the Uzbeks always got new clothes for the New Year, a secular holiday. The boy replied that only on Id-i Ramazan and Id-i Qurban were new clothes given among his ethnic group, but perhaps the Pashtun custom was different. The Pashtun then said that they did not receive new clothes either, but surely the boy had at least visited the Tomb of Ali. The boy replied that he personally had never visited the tomb, and especially not on New Year's.

The boy later told me that pilgrimage to the Tomb of Ali is sinful only at New Year's, precisely when most of the population goes to Mazar-i Sharif to visit the tomb.[2] This kind of religious testing was conducted in tones of scrupulous politeness as benefitted both host and guest. Mohajer men, due to their social history and religious training, are very skilled at these subtle kinds of test-games.

Ethnicity

Elements of material culture are used by all ethnic groups in Afghanistan as ethnic indicators. The range of signals is ordered hierarchically. Thus, the wearing of the chapan - the loose open quilted coat of cotton or silk worn by adult men - indicates that the wearer is from the north rather than from another region of Afghanistan. Then, different patterns and colors of stripes on the chapan reflect smaller regional indicators (Chagatay and Sjoberg 1955:82).

The embroidered cap worn by all men and boys is perhaps a better ethnic signal than the chapan. The mohajerin wear two styles of caps, black or green velvet backing with embroidered multi-colored flowers, and the same velvet backing with embroidered gold leaves. In the last five years, many young mohajer men have

begun wearing caps sent to their families by relatives in the Soviet Union or brought back by visitors. These caps are different from others made in Afghanistan and they are unquestionably a symbol of identification with fellow ethnics in the Soviet Union.

Food continues to be a good ethnic indicator. The round Uzbek bread differs from bread made in other parts of Afghanistan. Certain foods such as mantu - a steamed dough filled with chopped meat - are known to be made in the North. More subtle differences are apparent between foods prepared by mohajerin and non-mohajer Uzbeks. Halwa, a pudding-like soft candy, and qatlama, a fried pastry, are made by all Uzbek groups but the methods of preparation differ as do the results. At weddings and other large celebrations where women from various groups bring home-made foods to share, anyone can easily tell the kind of ethnic background the maker of a particular food has. People generally feel the foods made according to their own ethnic prescriptions are superior. There is a good deal of indirect criticism of food preparation and presentation at any large gathering of women.

The mohajerin are also differentiated from the rest of the Uzbek-speaking population by their preference for black tea over green. Schuyler noted that green tea is the traditional Uzbek drink as black tea was not known until it was introduced by the Russians (1887, I:126). According to Bacon (1966:58), green tea is the most popular drink among Soviet Uzbeks; Shaniiazov notes that green tea is drunk in most of Uzbekistan with the exception of the Tashkent region (1974:52). Chagatay and Sjoberg also note the preference for black tea among the Tashkent mohajerin of Kabul (1955:77). Probably the entire Fergana Valley region follows the Tashkent pattern and prefers black tea. It may be that under the Governate-General of Russian Turkestan, black tea was more available in those regions than in other parts of Uzbekistan. My informants generally preferred black tea; they explained that black tea is drunk to the regions north and east of the Afghan town of Pul-i Khumri and in Tajikistan while green tea is drunk north and west of Pul-i Khumri and throughout most of Uzbekistan. However, sometimes one member of a mohajer family preferred green tea over black.

The varieties of foods eaten, combinations of cooked foods, cooking methods and the entire set of beliefs and customs regarding eating form one of the more stable complexes in mohajer culture. There is little difference between my observations in this area and the account of Chagatay and Sjoberg twenty years ago or, for that matter, Schuyler's descriptions one hundred years ago. There is also nearly complete continuity between various recipes in use by the mohajerin and descriptions of dishes prepared in Uzbekistan (Shaniiazov 1974). As might be expected, the mohajerin use the more traditional methods since they lack electric or gas stoves, modern bakeries and western-style cafeterias.

The Individual and His Group, Problems of Identity

It is common procedure in Afghanistan for the future relations of two chance-met strangers to depend on the answer to the seemingly simple question, az kodam mardom asten? (Persian - of what people are you?). I heard this question addressed to a customer by a shopkeeper and by a woman guest to another at a celebration. The question comes up in countless numbers of social situations.

Table 1 represents the hierarchy of identity responses available to the emigrants from the town of Kasan and their descendants. Note that the questions overlap response levels.

TABLE 1

Identity Questions and Responses

Question Concerning	Response	Foundation	Referent By Others
level 1 qaum	Kasani	town origin	none
level 2 qaum	Explanation - from the other side	history, geography	Ferganachi Bukharai
mardom (rare)			
qaum	mohajer - usage limited to intimate exchanges	"	"
level 3 mardom	Uzbek	language	Uzbek
mardom	Tajik (not used except on government identity cards)		Tajik

Table 1 indicates that an individual may choose to identify with a relatively small group, Kasanis, or with a large group of perhaps a million speakers, the Uzbeks. The social context which partially determines the choice in such matters is worth a detailed examination.

The choice of Kasani is most likely to occur in a situation in which both parties in the conversation are mohajerin, yet the individuals are not known to each other. In this context, a man might be asked his father and his father's occupation also. The label Kasani can be attached to the personal name as an identifying feature. Thus, I saw a business man's official stationery used for his import-export transactions with the heading, Sayid Mobashir Kasani. Those born in Afghanistan use the same appellation. Thus, a member of the first Afghan-born generation told me to refer to him in my book as Mohammad Amin Kasani. Never did anyone indicate that he was to be called after the town of Kunduz. Occasionally a young person, usually under twenty years of age, would vehemently insist that Afghanistan, more specifically Kunduz, was the watan - homeland. But their parents would even more frequently say that the watan was Shurawi, the Soviet Union.[3]

The most common response given when identity questions were asked was the simple explanation "from the other side" which refers to the other side of the Amu Darya River. Dupree says that immigrants from across the Amu are known as pay-yi-Daryāi (1973:74), but I never heard this exact usage.

The native/ non-native dichotomy relevant to these identity questions has overt political implications which are readily commented on by informants. Discrimination in property disputes and other difficulties in dealing with government bureaucrats are laid at the door of Pashtun indifference and/or hostility to non-natives. Though they depricate their "second class status" in Afghanistan, immigrant background has for some become a focal point for resistance to Pashtun dominance. Note that theoretically there are native Tajiks and Uzbeks as well as immigrant Tajiks and Uzbeks. However, the native/non-native distinction has been fused with the Pashtun/non-Pashtun distinction by most politically aware young mohajer men. The fusion of the two distinctions is augmented by the fact that to the overwhelming majority of all ethnic groups in Afghanistan including Pashtuns, Afghan means Pashtun. As one mohajer succinctly put it, "The very name of this country, Afghanistan, land of the Afghans, is an insult to us."

Ferganachi,[4] the most common label used by outsiders, is resented by some Fergana mohajerin because they believe it points to the native/non-native dichotomy. Their attitude is thus inconsistent but clear. They are allowed to refer to themselves as emigrants yet no one else is. Actually, informants say that the public use of Ferganachi in their presence was formerly unusual. Nowadays, it seems to have lost some of its power as an insult and may be heard on public occasions in inter-ethnic exchange. I heard a hired woman musician from Khanabad address the women at a wedding: "Oh Ferganachis, what is the matter with you? Why aren't you giving me money?" The custom is to pay the hired musician in small amounts in praise of various guests who take turns dancing. In this case the use of the term Ferganachi was considered amusing. Those who heard the woman smiled and one said to me, "Did you hear her call the Ferganachis so she can be paid." In many social interactions with outsiders the label Ferganachi is now accepted and passed over without comment.

Mohajer women and perhaps the majority of mohajer men do not have the next level of response in their repertoire. To identify with the larger groups of Uzbeks or Tajiks means that an individual is disregarding two of the most important considerations of the previous level. First, the consideration of endogamy as a group boundary mechanism has disappeared. The Uzbeks or Tajiks include many groups which are themselves endogamous. Marriage with an Uzbek or Tajik who is not of your group may formally be said to be not as bad as marrying, for example, a Pashtun, but informants generally consider it equivalent to marrying a stranger with the resulting loss of a group member. Second, the common historical dilemma shared by mohajerin, the abandonment of the homeland, is lost when the term Uzbek or Tajik is used as self-definition. Many Uzbek and Tajik groups originated in Central Asia with remnant groups now residing in Afghanistan. These remnant groups use different labels and distinguish themselves from each other under most circumstances.

Mohajer informants who do use the Uzbek label are young men usually with a high school education. Often they have been educated either at Kabul University or at one of the local teacher training institutes. The broader experience in interaction with outsiders has led to a heightened political consciousness in many cases. It is these men who form study groups and literary groups for Uzbek language work. They may purchase records and tapes of classical Central Asian music. They are aware of domestic political currents which at certain times have been more liberal to the expressions of ethnic consciousness by minorities.

One of the young men who identifies himself as an Uzbek told me that during the period he attended Kabul University, 1967-71, he and other northerners would never openly state that they were Uzbeks. However, in 1976-1977 this was readily done.

He told me that as a teacher he now make. the point of speaking to his Uzbek and Turkmen students informally in the Uzbek language. For example, after class when these students came for help, he spoke to them in Uzbek. Supposedly, the Pashtun students didnot especially like this practice, but he felt that he could then make an open point about linguistic discrimination. Pashto, Persian and English are taught in the schools but there is no mention of the Turkic languages.[5]

On one occasion, in the used clothing bazaar, I observed this teacher being asked his group by a Pashtun shopkeeper. The shopkeeper was confused because the man was dressed in western-style clothes, with a foreign woman and yet was speaking fluent Pashto. In reply to the shopkeeper's question he replied simply, "I am an Uzbek." He explained later that he speaks Pashto to Pashtun shopkeepers because it occasionally helps to get the price down. Note that in this situation the identity response, Uzbek, indicates a pride in minority status in the face of Pashtun dominance. In addition there is an indication of a pan-northern identity of Turkic speakers expressed in the exchange. Uzbeks were the rulers of the population to the north; the Pashtuns are viewed as interlopers. In the north Uzbek pride is strong.

This man justifies his identity statements by a reference to his own family background. Though his father is Kasani, his mother is from a Kokand village, an Uzbek. He told me that he prefers to take his identity from his mother's side. A possible reason for this involves his kin situation. Though this informant's family lives in mahalla Kasani where the Kasanis predominate, he lacks patrilateral kin within this group as his father emigrated without any other relatives. On the other hand, matrilateral kin are numerous within the mahalla, in other parts of Kunduz, Khanabad and Kabul. In addition, the mohajerin as a whole are predominately Uzbek rather than Tajik. This may lead the choice of Uzbek to seem more plausible. Finally, the Uzbek identity itself may contain elements which led it to be chosen over Tajik. Uzbeks were the rulers of northern Afghanistan and the ruling dynasties in the three emirates of Central Asia. They are known as warriors while Tajiks are considered pacific. Perhaps it is the military and leadership characteristics which led him to find the Uzbek identity appealing.

For whatever reason, the choice of the Uzbek identity over the Tajik is the regular pattern for the mohajer men who do choose to make this level of response to identity questions. Even when Kasani individuals can have no personal justification for their use of the Uzbek identity, they claim it anyway. Perhaps there is recognition that Uzbek speech operates as an ethnic boundary and a shared ethnic tradition. Those who speak Uzbek, whether native or immigrant, share a distinct cultural pattern. Though recognizing the different groups within the larger Uzbek unit, the men who choose to identify with the larger unit feel an inarticulate connection with other Uzbeks. Whether it is the common political reaction they feel to Pashtun dominance, or some shared semantic structuring of the universe, two men who find they speak Uzbek seem to trust each other more readily. I was told repeatedly that the only workmen that would be hired to work within the mohajer household compounds were other Uzbeks. When I asked the identity of plasterers or carpenters brought into the compound, they turned out to be from some Uzbek group. When the household in which I lived sold a male calf it was to a special friend of the family, a village Uzbek.

The Tajik identity was never assumed by my Kasani informants when they were asked identity questions. They would occasionally identify others as Fergana Tajiks. Those so identified were usually completely Persian speaking. Although they understood the Uzbek language, they replied in Persian never using Uzbek speech themselves.

Despite this difference they were completely circumscribed within the endogamous mohajer community. The Kasanis themselves are an intermediate group between these farsiwan (Persian speaking) mohajerin and other Uzbek-dominant speakers among mohajerin. The Kasanis and even Uzbek-dominant speakers were identified as Tajiks on official government documents including citizenship cards and marriage certificates. It may be that the government bureaucracy prefers to list most people as Tajiks without even ascertaining origin. Perhaps when the immigrants first sought identity cards it was a safer identity to assume and now younger men prefer to avow the Uzbek identity. Whatever the reasons, the mohajerin are officially considered Tajiks, a fact which has little relevance to their self-image.

Group Definitions and Ethnic Relations

The key concept to be discussed below is mohajerin. The ambiguity of this word when used as a group definition created confusion in the minds of my most introspective and sophisticated informants. Despite the ambiguity, the term is vital to their own notions about themselves and other groups. Actually, the term is used as a scale which has a range of inclusion possibilities. Ambiguity arises when, on the abstract level, informants are using the word to include different labelled and unlabelled groups. Thus, as one informant put it, when we say mohajerin do we mean everyone who came from the other side, or do we mean everyone who calls himself mohajer, or do we mean some special group. These do not by any means match and informants use the term each way.

Taking the inclusive end of the range first, informants may use the term mohajerin and mean Kirgiz, Turkmens, Kazakhs, Uzbeks and Tajiks. All of these include some who came into Afghanistan within the last 55 years. Here it is the historical fact - the flight from the Soviets - which is emphasized. When I was discussing this use of the term with informants it was agreed that it was technically correct, yet there was a good deal of discussion about the Turkmens and the Kazakhs. There was a certain feeling that Kirgiz and Turkmens should not be included and the Kazakhs were even more problematic.

In the case of the Turkmens the reason for exclusion seems to be simply that Turkmens are known as Turkmens. Whether they originated in Afghanistan or Central Asia matters not to the Turkmens or to others. Slobin, who of all ethnographers is the most aware of the native/immigrant dichotomy, says of the Turkmens that the vast majority are recent immigrants (1976:12). He notes that the powerful leading family of Qizilayaq who are known for their religious leadership came in 1916 (1976:13). Yet Slobin refrains from using the term mohajerin to refer to the Turkmens, noting instead named tribal groups and the lack of ethnic mixing with other peoples. While many Turkmens are technically mohajerin, the fact is that they view themselves and are viewed by others first and foremost as Turkmens. This label is used and no other is needed.

So called ethnic aloofness, Turkmen separation from other northern groups, is also indicated in the stereotypic judgements made about them by others. The judgements, uniformly negative, are that Turkmen are alcohol and opium users, that they mistreat their women, forcing them to work all day on carpets. My women informants were particularly negative about the Turkmens' alleged propensity to marry polygynously. They feared Turkmens as lustful evil men. The Andkhoi Uzbek man in one lane of mahalla Kasani was thought by some women to be a Turkmen. They insisted that they could not understand his speech when they overheard it, that he was ugly like a Turkmen and, above all, that I should never visit the Andkhoi household when he was there. The man by his own word was an Uzbek and was viewed as an Uzbek by the men of the mahalla. The significant fact in this context is the extreme form of the expressed fear of Turkmen men. On only one occasion was a Turkmen a guest in the

household where I lived. The guest was a schoolboy, a friend of the third son. The two ate together in the guest house. Even the Andkhoi Uzbek women, who were from an area of much greater Turkmen population, had never attended a Turkmen wedding celebration. The Kasani women did know a Bukharai woman married to a Kabuli Turkmen. This woman, her kin and they were involved in the reciprocal exchange of invitations to large-scale celebrations. But there was no connection between the woman's husband, his natal kin and the Kasanis except that of reputation. He was known to be a rich businessman with a house in Paghman, a summer resort town near Kabul. The most frequent contact between mohajer men and Turkmens was in the bazaar, the Turkmens having the carpet selling shops in the Kunduz bazaar. The Turkmen language and the Uzbek spoken by my informants were mutually intelligible and used by each in business transactions.

The case of the Kazakhs is more complex. There are far fewer Kazakhs than either Uzbek or Tajik immigrants. Perhaps the distance from the Kazakh homeland to the Afghan border was prohibitive. Slobin reports that in Mazar-i Sharif the Kazakhs are in charge of chapan sales (1976:17). My data indicates that this is a typical mohajer occupation in the north. Slobin also cites a unique Kazakh musical tradition not assimilated to the Uzbek-Tajik standard (1976:94-5). It would seem that the Kazakhs are separated from the Uzbek-Tajik immigrant group but not to the extent that Turkmens are separated. For this reason my informants could not decide if the Kazakhs were always included under the mohajer label. Certainly, as one man pointed out, they are all from the other side yet, as another noted, they use another label and are always called Kazakh by others. It would seem that due to the small number of Kazakh immigrants, they are not immediately thought of when the term mohajer is used. Yet due to their special relations with the Uzbek immigrants, they make up a unique subset of the immigrant community.

In Kunduz, many Kazakhs live in a particular neighborhood which is also home to many Uzbek mohajerin. The two groups within the neighborhood have reciprocal relations; the Kazakhs are invited to the celebrations, weddings and circumcisions of the Uzbeks and the Uzbeks are invited to the Kazakh celebrations. Social relations have developed within both the male and female communities. In mahalla Kasani one mohajer Uzbek is married to a Kazakh woman. The woman is sickly and does not come out of her household much but she is involved in the core community of the mahalla which is dominated by the Kasanis. At the marriage of her son the Kasani women took the lead in the celebrations- welcoming the bride and her relations to the household. The Kazakh woman is invited to all but the smallest gatherings held by her Kasani neighbors.

Perhaps the best clue of qaum community feelings toward her occurred at a sumulak distribution.[6] Early one morning, when the sumulak was ready, several women in charge of the preparation began spooning the pudding-like substance into bowls and handing them on trays to neighborhood children who were to deliver a bowl to specified households in the mahalla before the morning meal. One little girl was told to deliver a bowl to the Kazakh woman, mentioned as is polite by teknonymy. When the girl was repeating to whom her bowls were to go, instead of using the polite form of address, she said, "and one to Kazakh khala" (Kazakh aunt) whereupon the woman burst out laughing. Kazakh is considered an impolite term with the implication of a vagabond (Schuyler 1877:I;104). They admonished the girl for her smart tongue, told her to speak of the Kazakh properly, but after she left they again laughed at this joke.

The Kasani women look down upon the Kazakhs rather as poor relations. In their view the more Mongoloid appearance of the Kazakhs with their high prominent cheekbones and epicanthic eyefolds makes them ugly. In face to face encounters they are always treated politely. The Kazakh language and the Fergana Valley Uzbek dialect are mutually intelligible; there is no communication difficulty between the two groups. However, many Kazakhs cannot speak Persian and have difficulty in speaking with those mohajerin who are solely Persian speakers.

Slobin reports (1976:104) that the Kazakhs are generally at lower socio-economic levels than mohajer Uzbeks. I agree with his statement at least for the Kunduz area. To give a concrete example, my mohajer family had entered into a patron-client type of relationship with a particular Kazakh family. Several years ago a Kazakh boy was injured in an automobile accident. The eldest son of the mohajer family got the boy a job as a janitor in the boys' high school. The boy was the sole economic support of his aged mother. Although their household was across town, a thirty-minute walk away, the boy's mother came once a month to pay her respects to the female members of this family to whom she owed her sustenance. Even in the dead of winter she came on her periodic visits, never wearing a chadri (veil), always with a worn chapan draped over her head. The woman was always ushered into the family rooms, given a sweet table first and usually a full meal with a rice dish later. In other words, she was treated as an honored guest. Still, the women in the family did not visit her home. In the view of both parties she was fulfilling an obligation through her visits. There was a prolonged greeting ritual conducted by the Kazakh woman who asked about all male and female members of the family. If the man who got her son the job was present in the household, the Kazakh woman made a point of speaking to him personally.

Social contacts between the Kazakhs and the Uzbek mohajerin are fairly frequent. But intermarriage is unusual; both groups maintaining the separation. The fact that the Kazakhs are outside what most mohajerin informants considered the permissible endogamous unit is perhaps the reason that most often the term mohajer refers only to Uzbek and Tajik immigrants and not to Kazakhs.

Slobin tends to view the mohajerin as Uzbeks from urban areas in Transoxania (1976:12). My data indicates that both Uzbeks and Tajiks are always included in the term though Uzbeks form a numerical majority. In tracing the kin connections for various families, one finds that there are no distinctions made between Uzbek and Tajik immigrants. Uzbek and Tajik families are linked within the same network. There is intermarriage on a fairly wide scale. Certainly the rate of intermarriage between mohajer Uzbeks and Tajiks is much higher than the corresponding intermarriage rate between mohajer Uzbeks and native Afghan Uzbeks, and mohajer Tajiks and native Tajiks. Nor are there any cultural differences between immigrant Uzbeks and Tajiks. Such symbolic items as the men's embroidered caps, women's dress and food are identical for both. The only difference appears to be language use. A difference in the household language pattern in addition to knowledge of background and kin of families identifies them as Uzbek or Tajik.

Language and Ethnicity

There are certain feelings that the Fergana Valley dialect of Uzbek is being lost. Some informants are unable to prevent the use of Persian even among their own children as that language gains reinforcement in the schools. Women are the primary carriers of Uzbek. They speak it at all their gatherings. Younger men, on the other hand, are more likely to use Persian.

In the household in which I lived the first son and his wife were fluent bilinguals. Yet due to the formality and constraint present when they first married, they began speaking Persian to each other, a pattern which has continued throughout their marriage. Their children picked up the usage. For at least the oldest daughter Uzbek is a rarely spoken language and when she does speak it to be polite to visitors, she speaks it haltingly. The man's brother married an Uzbek dominant bilingual. She is fluent in both languages but must speak Uzbek when telling long stories. The effect on other members of the family has been to increase the amount of Uzbek speech in general use. Her husband, formerly not as fluent in Uzbek as in Persian, has greatly increased his skill and use of that language. Their nieces' and nephews' comprehension and use of Uzbek has also increased. This family's use of both languages within the household is typical of the Kasani sub-group which stands intermediate between Uzbek and Tajik mohajerin. In this position the Kasanis are perhaps more open to language usage fads that periodically seem to shift. Recently there has been a resurging interest in Uzbek which may be tied to various socio-political pressures emanating from Kabul.

Despite the attachment to Uzbek as part of the identity complex for most mohajerin, it is reasonable to assume that both languages have had a great influence on each other. Interestingly, the Uzbek language spoken by the mohajerin is referred to as Uzbeki, with the Persian suffix indicating language. Informants were unfamiliar with the Turkic suffix, cha, which indicates language. In Uzbekistan the Uzbek language is known as Uzbekcha (Raun 1969:2). In Afghanistan, Persian has had a continuing impact on Turkic linguistic practice; in Soviet Central Asia the process has been slowed down due to the standardization and written form of the Turkic languages.

In practice linguistic criteria and the immigrant/native distinction are not wholly separated. The differing linguistic patterns of the homeland and Afghanistan influence informants' judgments. An old Kasani once told me that in Afghanistan no one was learning to speak properly. I asked him what he meant and he explained that Uzbek greetings always involve the formal form of the second person; the plural is used for addressing one individual. Thus, the greeting is: yakhshimisiz, janingiz jurmi, yakshi yuripsizmi. The use of the siz and ingiz forms indicates formality and politeness. In Afghanistan, the man complained, everyone speaks like this and he spoke what he considered to be the typical Persian forms used in Afghanistan emphasizing the informal singular second person: Chetor asti, khub asti. In his view the speech, in fact, the overall behavior of the younger generations was degenerating due to the Afghan environment.

In this example, two distinct thoughts are linked together. The first is that Uzbek is a superior language spoken by superior people who know the proper way to behave. The second is that Uzbek is somehow associated with Central Asia and Persian with Afghanistan, a view not quite correspondent to empirical reality. Despite the many Uzbek speakers native to Afghanistan and the Persian speakers native to Central Asia, the attitude remains - Uzbek is the language of the homeland and Persian the language of exile.

In the chapter on Pathan identity and its maintenance in Ethnic Groups and Boundaries (1969), Barth defines the criteria which the Pathans (Pashtuns) feel is vital to their group identity - patrilineal descent, Islam and Pathan custom.

My analysis of the mohajerin indicates a different complex as the key to identity and its maintenance. Islamic orthodoxy is a criterion common to both groups, but in the Pashtun case Barth connects Islam to lineal descent fictively traced back to the time of the prophet (1969:19). In the case of the mohajerin it is extreme

behavioral piety about which judgements are made. Rather than the lineal descent idiom the analogy between exile from Soviet Central Asia for religion's sake and Mohammad and his mohajer followers' flight from Mecca to Medina connects the group to the Islamic golden age.

Proper Islamic behavior as viewed by the mohajerin keeps brideprice down in order to facilitate close endogamous marriages. The principle of endogamy in my opinion is another portion of the group identity-maintenance complex. This was succinctly expressed by an informant who said, "I would prefer that my sister marry one of our people, a poor man with no job for 5,000 afs, than a Pashtun who is rich and had attended Kabul University for 100,000 afs." I believe that marital endogamy and the resulting affinal links between families are as important to these people as lineal descent is to the Pashtuns. Moreover, intimacy within the household and between households at least partially cross-cutting the separation of the sexes is a direct result of the preferred pattern of endogamy.

The final portion of this identity complex is the significance attributed to the Uzbek language. I have noted the widespread feeling that Uzbek is the language of the lost homeland, of proper speech, while Persian is the language of Afghanistan and assimilation.

Thus, the group identity of a community initially formed as a reaction to Russo-Soviet imperialism in Central Asia is maintained through interethnic competition in Afghanistan. The fate of the mohajer community with its known anti-Soviet biases under the current regime is unknown.

NOTES

1. Prayer five times a day is the common pattern for both men and women.

2. On Noruz (New Year's Day, March 21), our household did not even go out to see the sights. A community elder had said that Noruz was either an Iranian holiday (not good for Sunnis) or a holiday for kaffirs (unbelievers).

3. The watan was not known as Turkestan. Sometimes the reference made was Tajikistan which is used to mean all Soviet Central Asia (Slobin 1976:9). The use of Shurawi and Tajikistan is another clue that these emigrants were accustomed to Soviet usage.

4. The label Bukharai refers to a slightly different group, primarily Persian speakers, from the area of the former emirate of Bukhara. However, all groups from Central Asia use this term when making the pilgrimage to Mecca, trading on the Bukharan image of Muslim piety and learning.

5. The current regime plans to change this and institute minority language study.

6. Sumulak (Uzbek), samanak (Persian) is a food prepared from the juice of green wheat squeezings at women's gatherings around New Year's time.

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